



CHURCH OF GOD BANNER



www.onalaskachurchofgod.com

DECEMBER, 2012

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD: 3RD. AVE. & HWY. 508 ONALASKA, WASHINGTON 98570

PATTERN OF LOVE

by: Jack Smith

I didn't question Timmy, age nine, or his seven-year-old brother Billy about the brown wrapping paper they passed back and forth between them as we visited each store.

Every year at Christmas time, our service club takes the needy children in our town on a personally conducted shopping tour. I was assigned Timmy and Billy, whose father was out of work. After giving them the allotted \$4 each, we began our trip. At different stores I made suggestions, but always their answer was a solemn shake of the head, no. Finally I asked, "Where would you suggest we look?"

"Could we go to a shoe store, sir?" answered Timmy, "we'd like a pair of shoes for our Daddy so he can go to work."

In the shoe store the clerk asked what the boys wanted. Out came the brown paper. "We want a pair of work shoes to fit this foot." Billy explained that it was a pattern of their Daddy's foot. They had drawn it while he was asleep in a chair.

The clerk held the paper against a measuring stick, then walked away. Soon he came with an open box. "Will these do?" he asked. Timmy and Billy



handled the shoes with great eagerness.

"How much do they cost?" asked Billy.

Then Timmy saw the price on the box. "They're \$16.95," he said in dismay. "We only have \$8."

I looked at the clerk and he cleared his throat. "That's the regular price," he said, "but they're on sale for \$3.98, today only." Then with shoes happily

in hand the boys bought gifts for their mother and two little sisters. Not once did they think of themselves.

The day after Christmas the boys' father stopped me on the street. The new shoes were on his feet, gratitude was in his eyes. "I just thank Jesus for people who care," he said.

"And I thank Jesus for your two sons," I replied. "They taught me more about Christmas in one evening than I had learned in a lifetime."

A CHRISTMAS CREED

Walter Russell Bowie

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons

all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself. I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.



BECAUSE OF LOVE

A brother and sister had made their usual hurried, obligatory pre-Christmas visit to the little farm where their elderly parents dwelt with their small herd of horses. The farm was where they had grown up and had been named Lone Pine Farm because of the huge pine, which topped the hill behind the farm. Through the years the tree had become a talisman to the old man and his wife, and a landmark in the countryside. The young siblings had fond memories of their childhood here, but the city hustle and bustle added more excitement to their lives, and called them away to a different life.

The old folks no longer showed their horses, for the years had taken their toll, and getting out to the barn on those frosty mornings was getting harder, but it gave them a reason to get up in the mornings and a reason to live. They sold a few foals each year, and the horses were their reason for joy in the morning and contentment at day's end.

Angry, as they prepared to leave, the young couple confronted the old folks "Why do you not at least dispose of The Old One." She is no longer of use to you. It's been years since you've had foals from her. You should cut corners and save so you can have more for yourselves. How can this old worn out horse bring you anything but expense and work? Why do you keep her any-

way?"

The old man looked down at his worn boots, holes in the toes, scuffed at the barn floor and replied, "Yes, I could use a pair of new boots." His arm slid defensively about the Old One's neck as he drew her near with gentle caressing he rubbed her softly behind her ears. He replied softly, "We keep her because of love. Nothing else, just love."

Baffled and irritated, the young folks wished the old man and his wife a Merry Christmas and headed back toward the city as darkness stole through the valley.

The old couple shook their heads in sorrow that it had not been a happy visit. A tear fell upon their cheeks. How is it that these young folks do not understand the peace of the love that filled their hearts?

So it was, that because of the unhappy leave-taking, no one noticed the insulation smoldering on the frayed wires in the old barn. None saw the first spark fall, none but the "Old One".

In a matter of minutes, the whole barn was ablaze and the hungry flames were licking at the loft full of hay. With a cry of horror and despair, the old man shouted to his wife to call for help as he raced to the barn to save their beloved horses. But the flames were roaring now, and the blazing heat drove him back. He sank sobbing to the ground, helpless before the fire's fury. His wife back from calling for help cradled him in her arms, clinging to each other, they wept at their loss.

By the time the fire department arrived, only smoking, glowing ruins were left, and the old man and his wife, exhausted from their grief, huddled together before the barn. They were speechless as they rose from the cold snow covered ground. They

nodded thanks to the firemen as there was nothing anyone could do now. The old man turned to his wife, resting her white head upon his shoulders as his shaking old hands clumsily dried her tears with a frayed red bandana. Brokenly he whispered, "We have lost much, but God has spared our home on this eve of Christmas. Let us gather strength and climb the hill to the old pine where we have sought comfort in times of despair. We will look down upon our home and give thanks to God that it has been spared and pray for our beloved most precious gifts that have been taken from us.

And so, he took her by the hand and slowly helped her up the snowy hill as he brushed aside his own tears with the back of his old and withered hand.

The journey up the hill was hard for their old bodies in the steep snow. As they stepped over the little knoll at the crest of the hill, they paused to rest; looking up to the top of the hill the old couple gasped and fell to their knees in amazement at the incredible beauty before them.

Seemingly, every glorious, brilliant star in the heavens was caught up in the glittering, snow-frosted branches of their beloved pine, and it was aglow with heavenly candles. And poised on its top most boughs, a crystal crescent moon glistened like spun glass. Never had a mere mortal created a Christmas tree such as this. They were breathless as the old man held his wife tighter in his arms.

Suddenly, the old man gave a cry of wonder and incredible joy. Amazed and mystified, he took his wife by the hand and pulled her forward. There, beneath the tree, in resplendent glory, a mist hovering over and glowing in the darkness was their Christmas gift, shadows glistening in the night light.

⇒ *Continued on page 4*



ALASKA'S HAPPENINGS

EARLY WORSHIP 8:15 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
MORNING WORSHIP 11:00 AM
SUNDAY EVENING 5:00 PM

~
MONDAYS

LADIES BIBLE STUDY
 2:00 PM

~
TUESDAYS

AL-ANON MEETING
 6:00 PM

~
WEDNESDAYS

SOUP & SANDWICHES
 6:00 PM

~
 BIBLE STUDY
 6:30 PM

~
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1st

BELL RINGING
 @
 BRENDA'S MARKET
 9:00 AM — 9:00 PM

~
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4th

LADIES LUNCHEON
 12:00 NOON

~
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8th

MEN'S BREAKFAST
 AT
 KIMBERLY'S CAFÉ
 8:00 AM

~
 CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
 9:30 AM

~
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16th

FOOD BANK SUNDAY
 &
 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24th

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
 6:00 PM

~
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30th

POTLUCK SUNDAY

~
COMMUNITY
EVENTS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1st

SCRAP BOOKING
 10:00 AM

~
MONDAY, DECEMBER 10th

TEA & PRAISE
 @
 COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN
 CHURCH
 10:00 AM

~
THURSDAYS, DECEMBER
6th & 13th

HAM RADIO CLASS
 7:00 PM

~
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER
19th

SENIORS ON THE GO
 12:00 NOON

~
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20th

AMERICAN LEGION
 6:00 P.M.

~
WINTER'S KISS

Mary Warner 2012

*Lord what a wondrous world I
 see,
 Snow drifting down so gleefully,
 Wild geese take to wing tonight,
 And the world is bathed in pure
 delight,
 Your hand fashioned each fall-
 ing flake,
 What a lovely world You've
 made,
 The blanket of white is absolute
 bliss,
 You, Lord, ordained this frosty
 kiss,
 Oh wondrous day my Savior de-
 signed,
 Holy moment that is solely mine,
 The children bundled up love to
 play,
 Joyfully chasing each falling
 flake,
 Lord what a wondrous world I
 see,
 Snow drifting down so gleefully,
 Wild geese take to wing tonight,
 And the world is bathed in pure
 delight,
 Oh Wondrous day my Savior de-
 signed,
 He laced the snow over every
 pine,
 He colors each scene here be-
 low,
 Sprinkling delight in the falling
 snow.*

Luke 2:11-12 (KJV) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.



BECAUSE OF LOVE from page 2

Bedded down about the "Old One" close to the trunk of the tree, was the entire herd, safe.

At the first hint of smoke, she had pushed the door ajar with her muzzle and had led the horses through it. Slowly and with great dignity, never looking back, she had led them up the hill, stepping cautiously through the snow. The foals were frightened and dashed about. The skittish yearlings looked



back at the crackling, hungry flames, and tucked their tails under them as they licked their lips and hopped like rabbits. The mares that were in foal with a new year's crop of babies, pressed uneasily against the "Old One" as she moved calmly up the hill and to safety beneath the pine. And now she lay among them and gazed at the faces of the old man and his wife.

Those she loved she had not disappointed. Her body was brittle with years, tired from the climb, but the golden eyes were filled with devotion as she offered her gift--

Because of love. Only Because of love.

Tears flowed as the old couple shouted their praise and joy... And again the peace of love filled their hearts.

This is a true story.

Willy Eagle

◆ Received from Jim Sparks

THE 'W' IN CHRISTMAS

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations -- extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six-year-old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's 'Winter Pageant.'

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

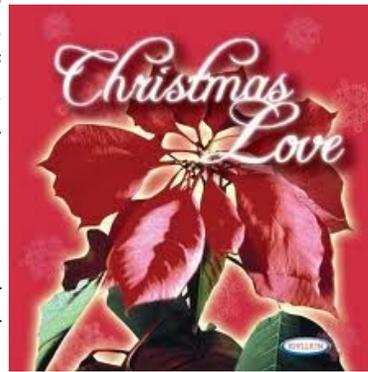
So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly scamperring to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as Christmas, I

didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment - songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer. So, when my son's class rose to sing, 'Christmas Love,' I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads. Those in the front row-center stage -- held up large letters, one by one,

to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing 'C is for Christmas,' a child would hold up the letter C. Then, 'H is for Happy,' and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, 'Christmas Love.'



The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter 'M' upside down totally unaware her letter 'M' appeared as a 'W.' The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her 'W.' Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

'CHRISTWASLOVE'

And, I believe, He still is. Amazed in His presence, Humbled by His love.

Q
U
I
Z



I cannot remember who was able to answer last month's quiz except for my sister, Katie Jackson. My mind has gone away and it didn't leave a forwarding address.

The answer was found in the 37th chapter of Genesis. Reuben the eldest tried to save Joseph.

Here is this month's quiz.

*Let me tell you he was mad
For what I took had made him
sad
He blamed another for what I
did
But couldn't find it for it was
hid.*

*I sat and watched him as he
did seek
But told him that I couldn't
stand on my feet.
And so he looked everywhere
But not where I hid he didn't
look there.*

*Now tell me my name and
what I stole
The name of the one who was
angry so.
And if you do, I think you can
A candy bar will be placed in-
to your hand.*

HIGHEST NUMBER

While eating lunch after church one Sunday, the Pastor's youngest son asked him

what the highest number he had ever counted up to was.

The Pastor said that he didn't know. Then he asked his son how high he had counted.

"5,372," came the prompt reply.

"Oh," the Pastor said, "why did you stop there?"

"The sermon was over."

CROSSING THE ROAD

There's a man trying to cross the street. As he steps off the curb a car comes screaming around the corner and heads straight for him. The man walks faster, trying to hurry across the street, but the car changes lanes and is still coming at him.



So the guy turns around to go back, but the car changes lanes again and is still coming at him. By now, the car is so close and the man so scared that he just freezes and stops in the middle of the road. The car gets real close, then swerves at the last possible moment and screeches to a halt right next him.

The driver rolls down the window. The driver is a deer. The deer says to the man.

"See, it's not as easy as it looks, is it?"

⇒ Received from Jim Sparks

OBEDIENT WIVES

And God promised men that good and obedient wives would be found in all corners of the

world.

Then he made the earth round ... and laughed and laughed and laughed.

⇒ Received from Ginger Vosburg

TRADING GAS CAPS

I have a friend who filled his car with gas at a self-service gas station. After he had paid and driven away, he realized that he had left the gas cap on top of his car. He stopped and looked and, sure enough, it was lost.

Well, he thought for a second and realized that other people must have done the same thing, and that it was worth going back to look by the side of the road since even if he couldn't find his own gas cap, he might be able to find one that fit.

Sure enough, he hadn't been searching long when he found a gas cap. He tried it on, and it went into place with a satisfying click.

"Great," he thought, "I lost my gas cap, but I found another one that fits. And this one's even better because it locks..."



A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.